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6 MAR 1963

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT: Indications of the Transfer of SAM Sites
in Cuba from Soviet to Cuban Control

REFERENCE:

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1.

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we do not believe that
the Cubans will be in a position to operate the SAM sites without
heavy Soviet assistance for at least another year and possibly
longer.

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2. There are 24 operational SAM sites in Cuba plus 6 missile assembly and support areas. On the assumption that the system operates on a 24-hour basis and that standard Soviet practice prevails, it is estimated that it takes 5,000 Soviets to man and maintain this system. At least forty (40) percent of these personnel must be technically trained with approximately half of these probably having advanced training requiring 6 to 18 months to complete. So, from the very beginning, the Cubans have a manpower requirement for at least 2,000 highly-trained technical specialists to replace their Soviet counterparts.

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there is none that these specialists are presently available. That they don't have this reservoir of manpower is further indicated by Fidel Castro's speech of 22-23 February in which he stated that to get a good technician to "manage" a surface-to-air missile site, he would have to take him (the technician) out of school. Castro ended rather plaintively, "What to do?"

3. We further believe that even a limited take-over of the SAMs by the Cubans would still require substantial Soviet technical support

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GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
declassification

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[REDACTED] An arrangement would perhaps
be made with the Soviets for them to furnish the maintenance
support for the SAMs. [REDACTED]

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4. In summary, we believe that the timing of the Cuban take-over of the SAMs is more realistically mid-to-late 1963 with Soviets supplying the specialized technical maintenance of the equipment and possibly weapons control assistance. We believe also that this would be especially true if the newer C-band FAN SONG, the latest Soviet radar associated with the SA-2, remains in Cuba. We, therefore, feel that independent Cuban operation of the present SA-2 system is at least one year away and may possibly take longer.

[REDACTED]

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ALBERT D. WHEELON
Assistant Director
Scientific Intelligence

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[REDACTED] (4 Mar 63)

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